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A GENERAL VIEW OF GERMAN PEDAGOGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF FOREIGNERS. II

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It is only gradually that German pedagogy has won an individual character and significance of its own. In the Middle Ages there was nowhere any question of an education of a national character. It may perhaps be considered as a German peculiarity that in the "humanistic" period there arose learned schools in extraordinary numbers, and even in very unimportant towns; that scholars quite without means of their own thronged from every part to these schools or to their learned teachers; that the study of Latin particularly was persisted in with amazing patience and perseverance; that in this pious devotion to the foreign language that of the mother-country was neglected and despised; that even after the schools had been freed from the patronage and dominion of the church, the cultivation of a religious attitude of mind always formed one of the aims of school education. For after all, these features indicate what has remained more or less characteristic of later times also. Less frequently there also appeared at that time the arrangement of granting a considerable degree of self-government to the students (scholars), of appointing "decurions" and "centurions" with definite functions and rights, though at the same time the rector hovered over the whole in the capacity of "dictator perpetuus." It would perhaps also be allowable to see something specifically German in the fact that many years were devoted to

the study of branches of knowledge which had practically nothing to do with the understanding of the real life of the time and practical aims in life. Yet the higher school education was not essentially different at that time in other civilized countries.

Now while many different proposals for reform of particular points were made here and there (for instance also in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), there arose in the beginning of the seventeenth century a German who hoped to reverse all the customary methods of education so completely that in place of all the dullness, drudgery, and relative unprofitableness, a pleasurable ease and interest should be brought into the acquisition of learning. Till the end of his life Wolfgang Ratke carried his ideas upon method and his enthusiasm from town to town, from one princely court to another, without ever having been able permanently to convince and to reform the world in this matter. Nevertheless, more silently, a truly pedagogic interest was thereby aroused (the Humanists had an interest only for knowledge and the power of imitation and for the technicalities of imparting knowledge), and this interest had remained active in Germany. The question as to the best form of schools, instruction, and education was never allowed to rest completely, for the reason indeed, that—at least in the case of the Protestants, i. e., of the predominant class in Germany—there was no authority in force such as that supplied by the Catholic church with its institutions, principles, and supporters. Particularly earnest and profound was also the endeavor of Amos Comenius, who had indeed studied at a German university, and who had considerable influence upon Germany, though he was not of our nationality, but only our neighbor in respect of civilization.

Moreover, as early as the seventeenth century quite a deep interest was taken in the organization of education by German princes. Indeed the rulers over small domains were even better able to occupy themselves personally with such peaceful tasks than the great European rulers with their great questions of power. Thus there arose a series of particularly efficient “princely schools” (*Fürstenschulen*), i. e., learned schools with relatively rich equipment (equipped and supported by some reign-

ing prince or other), with as learned teachers as possible, with particularly earnest scholars and with a special character and fame that at once began to form. Some of them have preserved this fame, as well as their distinctive peculiarities even to the present. Such are Schulpforta near Naumburg, and the Joachimsthal *Gymnasium* in Berlin. It must be considered the most important characteristic of these institutions, which entirely cut off their pupils from their families, that in them the mutual education of the scholars was more important than (or at least as important as) that given by means of directors and teachers, and that the individual was left comparatively free to determine the extent of his own industry, though he was taught to feel it was his duty to contribute to the honor of his school. Thus on the whole these German "princely schools" had quite a resemblance to the English "public schools" which mostly date from a still earlier time. But there they arose rather by the help of trade corporations or through the donations of charitable and wealthy individuals, a difference which is of course not accidental but characteristic. In all this time we find no trace in Germany of the fine playgrounds and habits of play of the English schools. The pupils sit before their books, or exchange their knowledge and their ideas, or prepare elaborate speeches, and such like. Moreover, even in England, it was only gradually that school life won its cheerful freedom combined with its rich equipment.

The seventeenth century brought the European nations into violent and manifold hostile collisions, but it also produced much interchange of customs. More especially there was formed under French influence a kind of ideal of the aristocratic man of the world, in opposition to the type of the man of learning and his methods of education so long revered. About the same time as Locke was pointing out new ways for the education of a young gentleman in England, and some hundred years after Montaigne had preceded him in France, there were formed in Germany, under the name of "knightly schools" (*Ritterakademien*), educational institutions for the sons of the upper classes, in which these latter were instructed in every possible kind of modern knowledge (including very superficial and worthless

ones) and in the so-called knightly (or, more properly, courtly) arts; in particular they learned modern languages, not exactly in place of the dead ones, but together with Latin. These schools had however on the whole no true vogue, or rather had no vogue at all, and did not become characteristic of German education. But a compromise gradually did take place between their educational aims and those of the humanistic schools which continued to exist. In part the princely schools (*Fürstenschulen*) and other important institutions gave place to the most important of the new subjects in their own curriculum, and in part more modern schools were called forth to stand by the side of the learned, that is, of the classical ones. In complete contrast to these aristocratic, secular institutions must have stood, it would seem, the schools founded by the German Pietists from about 1700 onward, and which were saturated with their spirit. But even these, or indeed precisely these, by struggling against what was traditional and stereotyped in church and school, by aiming after an essentially genuine and truly desirable culture, strove to do justice both to this world and the next; and, surprising, as it may seem, it was in them that the first German *Realschulen* ("modern" schools) had their origin. Accordingly these latter, organized and conducted by a pious, but at the same time practical, clergy, achieved an intimate combination of piety and fittleness for practical life. Ecclesiastical and secular school education did not become estranged and hostile in Germany, nor did they even at a later period, although the question as to the right relation between them has never been quite settled to this day. But in Germany we have never, as in France or Belgium, had the contrast of a definitely clerical attitude of mind and a non-religious or, at best, colorlessly deistical one. On the contrary, we have had a variety of individual views of religion, rarely of a radical or extreme nature, yet, it is true, with no small degree of antagonism. These may find their explanation in the inner and historical conditions of German intellectual life, but cannot be pursued further here.

Educational tendencies have, however, in another respect remained in opposition or at war up to the present. For some

hundred years or more *Realismus* and *Humanismus* ("modern" and "classical" education) have struggled with one another, and the strife has not even yet reached a real peace. As the "new humanism," the latter won new and great vitality from about the middle or end of the eighteenth century and still more in the nineteenth, by the belief that a vivid understanding of the much idealized ancient world must be obtained from the writings of the ancients, and by the expectation that this would produce an incomparably stimulating, elevating, ennobling, effect on the mind and character of the pupils. Thus they strove to attain an end that was far more valuable than that of the old humanists, limited as they were to the knowledge of languages, linguistic imitation, and the traditional content of knowledge. In the reality of school life, it is true, this attitude of enthusiasm toward antiquity did not prevail against all linguistic formalism and against philological pedantry nearly so often as it was glorified in fine phrases. Moreover the New Humanists were in general inclined strongly to despise other elements of culture, and for these reasons the contest was never without an animosity such as is hardly found elsewhere, except in the conflict of religious beliefs.

In opposition to the onesidedness of the humanistic impulse there next arose, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, the philanthropic movement. It had, however, no lasting success, since it was too extreme in its good tendencies while it combined these with very wrong ones. In their educational institutions, the "philanthropine" learning was to be turned into play; instead of one central branch of study, a motley variety of subjects were taken up without any true seriousness for any; they promised to teach the most difficult things in a ridiculously short time by the aid of a visionary method; much more importance was attached to the usefulness in life of the subjects taught than to the cultivation of mental powers; they thought to educate rather by means of a system of external distinctions than through the simple demands of duty. All this was in the highest degree open to objection, and the defeat of the entire system which soon ensued can easily be understood. But on the other

hand the "Philanthropines" in particular cases provided much good stimulation; more especially, in contrast to the dismal tone of the old schools, they lifted cheerfulness of school life and friendliness of treatment into a principle; they made room for physical exercises, and called attention to education as such, in distinction to mere instruction. Their founders seem more deeply inspired with humanism than the humanists, and their best tendencies have met, after all, with the approbation of later educationalists.

The whole of this conflict was followed in the nineteenth century by that between humanism and realism, or, more correctly, between the humanistic educational institutions and the so-called *Realschulen*. The idea in the foundation of the latter had been that they were to serve as a social intermediate layer and for preparation for the commercial professions, while the humanistic institutions were for the preparation for the learned ones. Yet it is a peculiarity of German life that it has not been possible to maintain any such distinction. The schools founded for this purpose, though under various names, have, sooner or later, always enlarged their curriculum, so as to meet the demands of general personal culture in addition to those of practical aims. The German—very much in contrast to the Englishman, for instance—finds it very hard to avow himself a utilitarian, that is, to aim explicitly, or indeed exclusively, at what will serve him as a practical advantage in life, and the German *Realschulen* aim entirely at being institutions for general culture. Even in the cases in which, in our own day, they have been assigned the definite aim of preparation for, let us say, the profession of merchant, the curriculum remains essentially a general one, and what belongs specifically to the profession is only loosely attached toward the close. Very much the same has been the case with the agricultural schools and others. And thus, in the course of a few decades, there have now arisen, under the name of *Realgymnasien* and of *Oberrealschulen*, schools which, although only the former occupy themselves with one of the two ancient languages, lay claim, with their various branches of study, to quite the same number of years and of hours of classes

and preparation as the humanistic *Gymnasien*. Moreover the pupils who have passed through them have also, since the year 1900, been granted admission to the university without essential limitations, at first in Prussia and later in most of the other German states. That in this way the former relation of superiority and subordination has become a parallelism, an equality, is not alone the case in Germany, for the most recent organization of the higher schools in France displays the same thing in another form—the whole development which modern culture has brought with it. Yet a strict separation of different lines of education always seems to be particularly difficult for us. On both sides there is a continual tendency to assimilate the curricula, although the impracticability of universalism, and the questionable value of attempts to produce it are becoming more and more recognized. Much as we have perhaps distinguished ourselves in advance of our neighbors in the idealistic tendency toward universality of culture, much credit as we have at least assumed to ourselves in this respect, the conception of universal culture itself threatens at present to fall very much into disrepute.

That Germany, and especially Prussia, won from the beginning of the nineteenth century a position in the world of pedagogy which was recognized as pre-eminent, is due to the co-operations of two factors: on the one hand to the earnestness of educational thought, and on the other to the energy of public organization; and the two are of course not without connection. As is generally recognized, Rousseau's protest against the existing and customary state of things produced a stronger stimulation in Germany than among the people in whose language he wrote and to whose methods of education he primarily referred. The representatives of the "Philanthropines" drew part of their principles from Rousseau, though, it is true, they were distinctly opposed to him in other respects. But Rousseau also exercised a modifying effect upon almost all later thinkers. And the number of educational thinkers is particularly imposing just in the period following the beginning of the century in question. Of considerable influence was also the fact, that the great new movement of philosophy after Kant roused the desire of bringing

pedagogy, that kind of applied philosophy, into a similar state of definite theoretical cohesion such as was now found, or sought for, in the purely philosophical systems. And thus, besides Kant himself, who also strove at least toward an exact construction of the science of pedagogy, Herbart, Schleiermacher, Beneke, Rosenkranz, Waitz, and many other philosophical thinkers, tried their hands at a system of pedagogy. The incomparably effective stimulus given by the lofty soul of Pestalozzi is classed with this period; and by the side of the disciples of the great masters, for the most part of Pestalozzi on the one side and of Herbart on the other, there arose a number of highly cultured and farsighted theologians, as well as an imposing number of reflective empiricists from the unforgotten Niemeyer and F. Chr. H. Schwarz onward, together with theorists of organization such as Stephani, Pölit, Graser; and to all these must be added poets and enthusiasts, Herder, and Goethe too, with plentiful educational ideas, E. M. Arndt, Fichte, Jean Paul. The first decade of the century alone saw the rise of an abundance of pedagogic theories, and what was begun on a large scale continued afterward on a small one and with more attention to detail. The literature dealing with pedagogic problems, which could indeed spread itself broadcast everywhere, is at this period in Germany too voluminous to be grasped, just as interest and zeal continue to be applied to this subject in an unsurpassed degree. It cannot be denied that people gradually fell, got lost in details, and were apt to lose sight of precisely the greatest problems as such. And accordingly revolutionary tendencies have not been wanting.

But now let us glance at the practical organization during the same period. Everyone knows that in Prussia, and the other German states as well, education is entirely directed by the government, and this may be considered in contrast, for instance to that of England, as the essential, fundamental difference, since in this matter what is internal is connected with the external. The Prussian kings stepped in some two hundred years ago now, at first with the effect that elementary education for all the children of the nation was aimed at, and gradually this was actually achieved by insuring the use of school facilities on the part of

parents by means of compulsion and civil punishment. To this has been added since the end of the eighteenth century the state control of higher education. Central and local school authorities appointed by the state, instructions for examinations, curricula for the different kinds of higher schools, definite privileges attached to the attendance of them, teachers admitted only on condition of having passed state examinations, regular inspection of the schools by state officials—all these arrangements have followed one another and continue to the present day. The private schools also depend in a certain degree upon state authority. All this has produced reliable results, and in one sense a universal prosperity of education, but not without certain additional factors having assisted the measures of the state authority.

It would not really be correct even to maintain (as people seem nowadays very apt to do, especially abroad) that the rulers inculcated discipline for the sake of schooling and thus securing docility, nay even submissiveness, on the part of their subjects. It is particularly in countries with a republican, or at any rate, almost republican constitution, that people are disposed to take this view, while we for our part certainly do not allow ourselves easily to be convinced of the special disadvantages of monarchy. After all, the first consideration in those governing circles was civilization, to raise the people above the condition of moral barbarism and scientific inefficiency. They wished to make their subjects happier and better, and from the **most important** part of general instruction, that is to say, religious instruction, they somewhat naïvely expected sure results of this kind, just as, moreover, learning to read was essentially to subserve the reading of the Bible. For the transference of the supreme power from the church to the civil government in the countries of the Reformation did not in the least involve a separation from religion or church in the education of young people. The aim of moral and religious training during that and the subsequent period, continued to be regarded as the highest, and taking precedence over all others, even in all the schools apparently devoted to quite practical ends in life. Even a ruler of such free opinions as Frederick the Great would not have abandoned it, and far as

it withdrew into the background in the epoch of rationalism and again in that of the so-called "Humanität," this was nevertheless rather a mere modification in a philosophical direction. The German ideal of culture as such (which was from the beginning one of a noble inner development, of a rich and harmonious growth) had of course nothing to do with the qualities desirable in subjects; it had not arisen under and been proclaimed by princes. The best men of the nation, the class that stood highest as regards mind and worth, were inspired with it, and by some of these, who to the blessing and honor of our state were appointed to the positions of supreme control, such an ideal of culture was made the goal of public education. Only the name of Wilhelm von Humboldt shall be mentioned here; many others might be added to his.

It was altogether a time of lofty ideals. Men were thinking of the highest development of the individual, but also of his duty of self-sacrifice to the whole, to the community, the nation, the state. And the sense of duty, by which our kings had shown themselves governed for some generations, which was the guarantee of the efficiency and trustworthiness of Prussian officials, but which also the great philosopher of Königsberg (Kant) had placed at the center of his system of practical philosophy, this same sense of duty was now the decisive factor in education. Whether it did not soon become so too exclusively is another question. But it would be quite unfair to affect to see any unworthy principle therein. Devotion to duty, even to harsh duty, is not synonymous with undignified surrender of personal freedom; and unconditional loyalty has nothing to do with an obsequious disposition. It is in reality the old phenomenon of fidelity to the liege lord under modern conditions. And it is in any case no unworthy aim to train young people to a consciousness of their duty, rather than to that of their claims to life and liberty and self-assertion. Hence, then, the definite examination requirements and the whole hard and fast regulation of scholars and of the pupils' duties; hence the very considerable exhortations to diligence, self-control, and perseverance. The Prussian secondary schools were during the greater part of the nineteenth century the most exacting in Germany, and, on the

whole, probably the most difficult anywhere to be found. Moreover almost all civil rights were made dependent upon successful attendance at school—shortened military service, admission to more influential positions in life, and so on.

Something else indeed co-operated with this civil-moral point of view. Science had advanced to much greater strictness in method and self-control, and also to a far more comprehensive field of knowledge, and the teachers in the higher school who had passed through these severe academic studies transferred as much as possible of this strictness of method to the schools, which, in addition to the intellectual gain, involved an increase in mental and pedagogical pressure. The reader may be reminded that thoroughness to the verge of pedantry, seriousness even to gloominess, are in general German qualities, or at any rate such as are often found in Germany. And if the Germans are sometimes described as born schoolmasters, this is certainly connected with these characteristics—although these latter are by no means all that are necessary, and are moreover fortunately not the only ones which are met with in German teachers.

[To be continued]